

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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R 230915Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 7440

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION BEGINS

REF: SEOUL 5646 DTG 261018Z JUL 75

SUMMARY: INDICATIONS ARE BOTH GOVERNMENT AND
OPPOSITION WILL TAKE HARDER LINE DURING FORTHCOMING
BUDGET SESSION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY THAN DURING SPECIAL
SESSION ON NATIONAL SECURITY IN JUNE-JULY. NOTING
THIS IS TIME FOR NATIONAL CONSENSUS, THE GOVERNMENT
PARTIES HAVE ALREADY REJECTED OPPOSITION SCHEDULING
DEMANDS. FOR ITS PART, THE OPPOSITION NDP IS ANXIOUS TO
RESTORE ITS TARNISHED CREDENTIALS AND PLANS TO CHALLENGE
THE GOVERNMENT'S JUSTIFICATION OF PRESENT POLITICAL
RESTRICTIONS, TO ACCUSE THE GOVERNMENT OF
OVEREMPHASIZING THE NORTH KOREAN THREAT, TO DEMAND
AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION, REPEAL OF EMERGENCY
MEASURE NINE, AND TO CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT'S
ECONOMIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES. UNDER EMERGENCY
MEASURE NINE HOWEVER, ANTI-GOVERNMENT RHETORIC IS NOT
LIKELY TO BE REPORTED AND THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE
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THAT THE ROKG POLICY OF MAINTAINING A RUBBER STAMP
ASSEMBLY WILL BE THREATENED DURING THE PRESENT
SESSION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE REGULAR 1975 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION BEGAN SEPTEMBER 22 IN THE ASSEMBLY'S IMPRESSIVE NEW BUILDING ON YOI-DO (RSSLAND) IN THE HAN RIVER. THE MOVE TO LAVISH NEW QUARTERS (13.5 BILLION WON) AT A TIME OF FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY FOR KOREA HAS FOCUSED SOMEWHAT MORE PRESS AND PUBLIC ATTENTION THAN USUAL ON THIS SESSION AND STIMULATED SOME DISCUSSION ABOUT THE PROPER CONDUCT OF THE KOREAN LEGISLATURE.

2. BOTH GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION HAVE CALLED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW ASSEMBLY TRADITIONS. IN HIS OPENING ADDRESS THE SPEAKER CALLED FOR AN ASSEMBLY REFLECTING NATIONAL CONSENSUS AND TRANSCENDING PARTY POLITICS. THE DRP AND YUCHONGHOE HAVE STRESSED THE DEVELOPMENT OF A "YUSHIN" ASSEMBLY. ALTHOUGH DECLARING GOVERNMENT WILLINGNESS TO HAVE DIALOGUE WITH THE OPPOSITION, DRP FLOOR LEADER KIM YONG-TAE TOLD PRESS THAT HIS PARTY WILL NOT TOLERATE ACTS DETRIMENTAL TO THE IDEALS OF YUSHIN AND THAT "MUCH EFFORT WILL BE MOBILIZED TO PLACE MAJORITY RULE ON A SOLID FOOTING." THE YUCHONGHOE FLOOR LEADER HAS DEMANDED A HALT TO "DISORDER AND CLASHES" CAUSED BY POLITICIANS SEEKING PERSONAL GAIN THROUGH POLITICAL MANEUVERS. SPEAKING FOR THE OPPOSITION, NDP FLOOR LEADER KIM HYONG-IL HAS SAID THAT THE GOAL ARJLIS PARTY IS TO ESTABLISH A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM, TO RESTORE FULL PARLIAMENTARY FUNCTIONS AND TO CREATE A NEW IMAGE OF THE LEGISLATURE WHICH IS TRUSTED BY THE PEOPLE.

3. CONTROVERSY HAS IN FACT ALREADY ARISEN. THE GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION DURING THE PAST WEEKS HAVE BEEN ARGUING OVER THREE NDP SCHEDULING DEMANDS:

--THAT A DAY BE SET ASIDE FOR KIM YONG-SAM TO SPEAK ON GENERAL OPPOSITION POLICY (THIS HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST BY OPPOSITION LEADERS).

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--THAT THE NDP SPONSORED BILL CONCERNING TESTIMONY AND APPRAISAL BE DEBATED AND PASSED BEFORE CONSIDERATION OF THE BUDGET, SO THAT SPECIFIC TESTIMONY ON THIS YEAR'S BUDGET CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE ADMINISTRATION. THIS BILL WAS PASSED, ALONG WITH MAJOR GOVERNMENT SPONSORED SECURITY LEGISLATION, DURING THE LAST SPECIAL SESSION BUT WAS LATER VETOED BY PRESIDENT PAK (SEOUL 5646).

--THAT THE TAX LAW BE AMENDED PRIOR TO THE BUDGET DEBATE SO THAT THE 1976 BUDGET CAN BE DRAWN UP IN LINE WITH NEW LEGISLATION.

4. NDP FLOOR LEADER KIM HYONG-IL HAS TOLD US THAT

DURING MEETINGS SEPTEMBER 19 THE GOVERNMENT PARTIES
REJECTED ALL NDP DEMANDS AND RAMMED THEIR OWN SCHEDULE
THROUGH THE STEERING COMMITTEE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS
SAID THAT KIM YONG-SAM MAY SPEAK ONLY DURING INTER-
PELLATIONS JUST AS ANY OTHER ASSEMBLYMAN. THE PROPOSED
OPPOSITION AMENDMENTS WILL BE DISCUSSED IN COMMITTEES
CONCURRENTLY WITH THE CONSIDERATION OF THE BUDGET.
KIM HYONG-IL BELIEVES THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS UNLIKELY
TO MAKE ANY SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS ON THESE
BILLS. IN FACT, HE REMARKED THAT THE YUCHONGHOE
ASSEMBLYMEN ARE ESPECIALLY HARD TO DEAL WITH SINCE
THEY BELIEVE STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE GOVERNMENT LINE
WILL HELP THEM SECURE REAPPOINTMENT WHEN THEIR TERMS
EXPIRE NEXT YEAR. (THE OPPOSITION CAN BE EXPECTED AS
IN THE PAST TO DEMAND ACTION ON ITS BILLS AS A PRICE
FOR PARTICIPATION IN PASSING THE BUDGET).

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5. THE SCHEDULE FOR THE NINETY-DAY ASSEMBLY SESSION
AS IT NOW STANDS IS AS FOLLOWS:

SEPTEMBER 22 - OPENING CEREMONY

SEPTEMBER 23 - FORMATION OF BUDGET AND SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 24 - 25 - REPORT ON PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY

OCTOBER 4 - PRESIDENT'S BUDGET MESSAGE READ BY THE PRIME
MINISTER

OCTOBER 6-11 - INTERPELLATIONS

OCTOBER 13-18 - COMMITTEE SESSIONS ON 1975 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET

OCTOBER 20 - VOTE ON SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET

OCTOBER 21-NOV. 27 - COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF 1976 BUDGET

NOV. 28-DEC. 2 - PLENARY SESSION ON BUDGET (DEC. 2 DEADLINE
FOR PASSING BUDGET)
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DECEMBER 3-22 - DISPOSITION OF REMAINING LEGISLATION
(APPROXIMATELY 130 BILLS)

6. NDP DEPUTY FLOOR LEADER HWANG NAK-CHU AND FLOOR LEADER KIM HYONG-IL TOLD EMBOFFS ON SEPARATE OCCASIONS THAT THE OPPOSITION WILL BE MORE AGGRESSIVE IN CHALLENGING THE GOVERNMENT THAN IT WAS IN THE LAST SPECIAL SESSION. KIM REMARKED THAT DURING LAST SESSION ROKG STRESS ON NORTHERN THREAT COMPELLED NDP TO MAINTAIN A LOW PROFILE. HOWEVER, DURING THIS SESSION THEY PLAN TO DISPUTE GOVERNMENT'S ASSERTION THAT SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS REQUIRE PRESENT POLITICAL RESTRICTIONS. ALSO IN OBVIOUS EFFORT TO CAPITALIZE ON PUBLIC DISGRUNTLEMENT OVER RECENTLY IMPOSED TAXES AND UNHAPPINESS OVER FOREIGN SET-BACKS, NDP WILL EMPHASIZE ECONOMY AND FOREIGN POLICY.

SPECIFICALLY NDP PLANS TO:

-- DEMAND RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY, TO INCLUDE AMENDMENT OF YUSHIN CONSTITUTION AND REPEAL OF EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE;

-- ARGUE FOR REDUCTION IN HEAVY TAX BURDEN OF KOREAN PEOPLE;

-- QUESTION GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC POLICIES;

-- CALL FOR MORE EFFECTIVE CANTAIGN AGAINST GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION;

-- CRITICIZE ROKG FOREIGN POLICY WITH EMPHASIS ON UN AND LIMA "FAILURES".

7. DESPITE PUBLICITY BEING GIVEN ASSEMBLY AND NDP'S PLAN TO RETURN TO THE OFFENSIVE, EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE CONTINUES TO RESTRICT REPORTING OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OPPOSITION ACTIONS. THUS OPPOSITION LEADERS ARE PESSIMISTIC THAT THEIR EFFORTS WILL HAVE MUCH EFFECT OUTSIDE THE ASSEMBLY. WHEN QUESTIONED BY EMBOFF AS TO THE PURPOSE OF NDP TACTICS IN FACE

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OF PRESENT CONSTRAINTS, KIM HYONG-IL SHRUGGED, SAYING "AT LEAST WE WILL HAVE DONE OUR BEST." SEVERAL GOVERNMENT ASSEMBLYMEN HAVE ALSO TOLD US THEY ARE CONFIDENT THAT OPPOSITION ACTIVITIES WILL NOT HAVE MUCH IMPACT ON POLITICAL SITUATION. AT SAME TIME POLICE OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS TAKING NO CHANCES OF ASSEMBLY GETTING OUT OF HAND AND THAT POLICE ARE UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE TO REPORT ON OPPOSITION PARTY PLANS.

8. COMMENT: OPPOSITION CLEARLY FEELS THAT NATIONAL SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS NOW ALLOW, AND PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS DEMAND, THAT IT RESUME ITS TRADITIONAL ROLE AS CRITIC OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES AND OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM ITSELF. FOR KIM YONG-SAM PERSONALLY THIS MAY BE THE LAST CHANCE TO RE-ESTABLISH OPPOSITION CREDENTIALS BEFORE NEXT YEAR'S NDP CONVENTION. THUS WE EXPECT A RELATIVELY HEATED SESSION. HOWEVER, AS OPPOSITION LEADERS THEMSELVES HAVE TOLD US, THE PRACTICAL EFFECT OF THE CONFRONTATION WILL LIKELY BE MINIMAL. OF SOME INTEREST IS THE RELATIVELY GREATER STRESS WHICH THE OPPOSITION INTENDS TO PLACE ON ECONOMIC AND FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES IN CONTRAST TO THE TRADITIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION. RECENT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS, ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND THE LARGE INCREASE PROPOSED FOR THE 1976 BUDGET MAKE THESE SENSITIVE ISSUES ON WHICH THE NDP MAY BE ABLE TO CAPITALIZE AND REMAIN, AT THE SAME TIME, WITHIN THE LEGAL LIMITS OF EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE.

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